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ABSTRACT

A questionnaire was administered to 19 licensed day-care mothers in Montgomery County, Maryland. This report presents what was found in observations of the family day care homes, and points out the relative merits and disadvantages of family day care and group day care. The sections of the report are: I. Introduction; II. The Needs of Children; III. Family Day Care in Montgomery County--A. Procedure; B. Data Summarized (The Caretakers; Fees; Substitutes; Facilities; The Children; The Activities; Placement; and Relationships with Parents); C. Conclusions; and D. Recommendations. Appendixes provide the Questionnaire, the Master List, and Official Notification. A bibliography is included. (DB)

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FAMILY DAY CARE AS OBSERVED IN LICENSED HOMES IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

by

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Report submitted to Professor B. Lucile Bowie in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

I recommend that this paper be accepted as a seminar paper required for the Master of Education degree.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The question of day care is an important one in the United States today. According to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, in 1969 there were 4.2 million working mothers who had children of preschool age. We know from the surveys made by the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor that the number of working mothers is increasing at a rapid rate and quality child care programs must be provided for their children. Help in caring for children is being requested by welfare mothers and members of the Women's Liberation. Day care is being developed by businessmen with the idea of setting up profit-making businesses, often as franchise operations. Private, non-profit groups are entering into the day care business with subsidies from the government and community members. Funds for day care services are being provided in ever greater amounts by the Federal Government under various programs such as Head Start, Social Security, research and training. Different approaches to day care are being studied by the government, particularly to facilitate the revision of current

welfare practices as being defined in the newly proposed Family Assistance Plan. The publication, Report on Preschool Education, advises that:

> Two of the ten projects in the Office of Economic Opportunity's "major systematic, nationwide study of Day Care" have been completed with most of the others due to report in the next couple of months. When the final reports are in . . . OEO hopes that the ambitious, $2.5 million program . . . will provide them with the information needed to know how to incorporate day care centers into the Family Assistance Plan proposed by President Nixon . . . .[1]

The fact that young children can benefit from high quality care covering the child's total experiences was first given wide exposure in this country by Head Start programs. Parents, particularly those who together with their children benefited from full-day Head Start programs, became aware of the advantages for children and parents when children received good group day care. The disadvantages of existing alternatives became clear, especially for parents with low incomes, who discovered that hiring a sitter could be an unsatisfactory solution for them and their children; others found that leaving children in someone else's home (probably unlicensed family day care) was frequently even worse for the youngsters.

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[1] "OEO Day Care Study Winding Down," Report on Preschool Education (Washington, D.C.: Capital Publications, Inc., January 27, 1971), p. 8.

A particularly shocking case of poor home day care was cited by Mary Dublin Keyserling in a preliminary statement at the White House Conference on Children. One interviewer found:

> . . . a day care home licensed to care for no more than 6 children. In it were found 46 children cared for by the day care mother without any assistance. Eight infants were tied to cribs; toddlers were tied to chairs; and 3, 4, and 5 year olds coped as best they could.[2]

Federal requirements spelled out in Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements issued in 1968, recommend family day care for children under 3 years of age, implying that its homelike quality provides 'mothering' that day care centers cannot give. But as indicated earlier, low income families in particular often find family day care inadequate.

Is all family day care inadequate? What about the licensed family day care homes in Montgomery County? The Montgomery County Department of Social Services has been licensing homes since 1968 when "Guidelines for Day Care" was issued by the Department of Social Services of the State of Maryland. By the fall of 1970 there was a total of 150 licensed homes listed in the files of the county department.

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[2]Mary Dublin Keyserling, "The Magnitude of Day Care Needs Today," Forum of Developmental Day Care Services for Children, White House Conference on Children, Washington, D.C., December 14, 1970, p. 3. (Mimeographed.)

Local newspapers were refusing to accept ads for child care from persons who had not been licensed. What can we learn by talking to caretakers and at the same time observing the care supplied by persons who do have licenses?

Good quality group day care also exists in Montgomery County under the auspices of a non-profit organization, the Montgomery County Child Day Care Association, Inc. The Association has started six centers since December, 1968, with approximately 30 children per center. This is in addition to the center under the auspices of the Montgomery County Department of Social Services with a capacity of 45 children and one under the Community Action Committee with another 40 children.

What can we learn from comparing the services provided by licensed day care homes and this group of day care centers? Knowing about group day care from previous experiences with cooperative nursery schools, Head Start, and non-profit group day care, the investigator decided the next step was to observe a sample of family day care homes locally. This study is then concerned with licensed day care homes in Montgomery County, Maryland. It behooves us to know whether the care being offered is adequate in quality and to determine what can be done to ensure that the children receive high quality care in order to develop

healthy personalities, minds, and bodies. The two questions that this study covers were: (1) What did the investigator find in observing family day care homes and (2) What are the relative merits and disadvantages of family day care and group day care?

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II. THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN

With the current concern about day care and the magnitude of the predicted need for child care facilities, there is widespread focusing on the quality of the guidance, or the kind of 'mothering,' being given to children. Educators, psychologists, and doctors are researching the development of the total child. They are trying to determine which experiences and what kind of relationships lead to the growth of the child's full potential.

At the 1967 Conference on Day Care and the Working Mother, John Walton of Johns Hopkins University put it this way:

> If you look back in folklore, you fill find that princes and prelates who have desired to control succeeding generations have said, "Give us the children until the age of 5, and we will not worry about their subsequent education." This may be a myth but it is part of our folklore. If you look at the opinions of some of our leading psychologists today, you will see what they say about the intellectual and academic importance of the earliest kind of childhood education in the formal sense. They agree that an individual's achievement in life depends

> very largely on what he has been helped to learn before the age of four . . . .[3]

More recently the Association for Childhood Education International published "The Child's Right to Quality Day Care, A Position Paper," which stresses the same idea:

> Events of the past few years have made the young child visible as never before. Project Head Start, by showing the extent of poverty in the U.S.A., turned floodlights on the child's needs in a way that came as a shock to most people. Growing employment of women with young children has further focused attention on the rising necessity for day care services. Research in human development has indicated clearly that the first four or five years of life are the period of most rapid physical and intellectual growth and of extreme importance as the basis for later development. With the entire citizenry now looking upon the young child as worthy of national attention and consideration, his needs for quality care and education can no longer be ignored.[4]

A generation ago, practically everyone looked at the infant as a "cute baby" to be fed and diapered, rocked and cooed at. However, as Esther P. Edwards pointed out:

> . . . the word "cognition"--knowing--became respectable in American psychology in the Fifties. Piaget in Switzerland and Vygotsky in Russia had shown as long

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[3]John Walton, speech contained in A Report of a Conference on Day Care and the Working Mother, sponsored by the Board of Trustees, Health and Welfare Fund, Baltimore Regional Joint Board, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, AFL-CIO, held at Baltimore, Maryland, June 16, 1967, unpaginated.

[4]Annie L. Butler, "The Child's Right to Quality Day Care," Childhood Education (November, 1970), p. 59.

> ago as the Twenties and Thirties that human intellectual functioning could not be sufficiently explained in any purely mechanical fashion . . . .
>
> . . . the supremely difficult feat of building language recognition and response which takes place during the first years of life can occur because there is a built-in neurological mechanism for language learning present in every normal human organism. But like the image on the sensitized negative, this potential will not appear as reality unless the proper circumstances develop it. Experience--the right experience--is essential.
>
> Heredity and environment interact. Hereditary possibilities are shaped by the influences that only human culture can provide; they are potentialities that must be developed while the young neurological organism is still rapidly growing, malleable, open to stimulus . . . then the right experience must come at the right time, or the potential must remain forever unrealized.
>
> Benjamin Bloom of the University of Chicago implies this when he says that the early environment, during the first five to seven years of life, is the significant one for intellectual development. This is why we are finally realizing that the young child's experience is of indelible importance, not only for his emotional life, but also in the formation of that aspect of man which is perhaps most crucially his own--his sapience . . . .
>
> We are at a point where we can see why education for the young child can matter enormously . . . .[5]

The Head Start developmental program, Parent and Child Centers, concentrates on the young child from birth to age three. In addition to providing services to children, it is interested, as its name implies, in the parents and

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[5] Esther P. Edwards, "Kindergarten is Too Late," Saturday Review (June 15, 1968), p. 68.

the total family relationships and well-being. In this connection its guideline pamphlet states:

> The earliest contacts between parents and their children carry great impact for both. It is not too much to say that the infant begins to learn how to be a parent himself from his own experiences as a baby. That is, loving care given to the young child seems to produce in him some capacity for repeating that nurture in the next generation. Throughout the formative years of childhood, the parent's actions and attitudes will have a deep impact on him. Defects in early care and in early identification can lead to weaknesses in interpersonal relationships which later may interfere with happy marriage and parenthood. In extreme cases, psychosis or schizoid conditions may result.
>
> Most children who are brought to psychiatric clinics during their school years showed definite signs of individual and/or family difficulties long before, during the preschool years or even earlier.[6]

It seems agreed that the child needs loving care, and in the case of two 'mothers'--the parent and the caretaker--that there be a good relationship to provide the best guidance for the child. Daniel Prescott's statement about preschool teachers applied equally to day care mothers:

> It is necessary that nursery school and kindergarten teachers have a full knowledge of the quality of the interpersonal relationships which exist in the home of each of their pupils because this information is necessary to real understanding of the behavior of each child and of his needs. In turn, this

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[6] U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity, Parent and Child Centers, A Guide for the Development of Parent and Child Centers, A Community Action Program, OEO Pamphlet 6108-11 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity, March, 1969), p. 2.

understanding is prerequisite to the making of wise decisions when interacting with the child and guiding his actions.[7]

But what happens when there is not this kind of sharing?

In family day care, the potential problems of the parents' sharing the care of a child are somewhat greater. The child's own mother tends even more toward dumping responsibility onto the daytime mother, and, conversely, toward even greater resentment of a successful day care placement. Unless there is considerable assistance to both women from skilled supervision, the child is likely to be exposed to constant re-placement or to being in the middle of a battle, with the day care "mother" and the parent vying in demonstrating affection and the ability to provide good mothering--if he does not fall into the abyss of relative neglect.[8]

In the publication, Children in Day Care with Focus on Health edited by Laura Dittmann, we are told that:

Close relationship between home and day caretaker helps to insure continuity. When the child is brought and called for, there should be an opportunity for an exchange of information on the child's state of health, his general behavior, eating and sleeping, and any unusual occurrences, whether or not they appear to affect the child immediately.[9]

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[7]Daniel A. Prescott, "The Role of Love in Preschool Education," Childhood Education (February, 1961), p. 274.

[8]Judith Caumann, "Family Day Care and Group Day Care: Two Essential Aspects of Basic Child Welfare Service," Child Welfare (October, 1961), p. 22.

[9]Laura Dittmann (Ed.), Children in Day Care with Focus on Health (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Social and Rehabilitation Service, Children's Bureau, 1967), p. 52.

In discussing "Child Development and the Part-Time Mother," John A. Rose, Director of the Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic, points out that there is no simple cause-effect relationship between the two factors of maternal employment and developmental image. In one instance, he cites:

> . . . many problems also arise when the part-time caretaker, either consciously or unconsciously, is in rivalry with the mother for the child's affections and is in a position to be very important to the child. Generally the younger the child, the more the balance of power over him lies in the hands of the person giving the most physical care.
>
> While mothers generally tend to have feelings of guilt for any arrangement to share child care, the mother who perceives herself as inadequate is the most guilt ridden and most susceptible to conflict arising from attitudes of rivalry and superiority in the person sharing her child's care.[10]

In describing an experiment, "Involving Parents in Their Children's Day Care Experiences," Margery M. Larrabee noted:

> The child in day care lives in two different worlds. What happens to him in his day-care placement affects what he does at home. What happens to him at home affects what he does in the day-care setting. When there is cooperation and good feeling between the mother and the day-care personnel, the child can

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[10] John A. Rose, M.D., "Child Development and the Part-Time Mother," Children (November-December, 1969), p. 216.

sense a continuity in caring and a greater consistency and stability in his daily experience.[11]

In a mimeographed study entitled, "Mothers' Ways of Encouraging Development in the Baby," Lois Barclay Murphy lists three ways in which the daytime caretakers can help mothers or both parents to contribute to the baby's development:

> . . . the staff . . . can maintain a consistent feeling of sharing the baby, respecting the mother's observations, communicating interesting behavior and steps in development seen during the day and exchanging awarenesses of what the baby likes, what stimulates him in a good way, what upsets (frustrates or irritates or overstimulates) him, what new interests or needs have appeared, ...
>
> Second, the staff can help mothers to give more to the baby, by first "giving" to the mother--appreciating her efforts, her appearance; being interested in her health, her work, in her other children, her plans. After the mother has experienced warm interest and helpfulness, she will usually want to give this to her own children.
>
> Third, where there are conflicts between the staff point of view in regard to questions of handling the baby, it is important for the staff to avoid ridicule or rejection of, or arguments with the mother. "Taking it easy," acknowledging the mother's viewpoint without promising to act upon it, taking a "let's see how things work out" attitude, may make a gradual rapprochement or coming together possible.[12]

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[11] Margery M. Larrabee, "Involving Parents in Their Children's Day Care Experiences," Children (July-August, 1969), p. 149.

[12] Lois Barclay Murphy, "Mothers' Ways of Encouraging Development in the Baby," Infant-Rearing Study, Children's Hospital, Washington, D.C., n.d., unpaginated (page 2 of 28 pages). (Mimeographed.)

Persons involved in working with children are concerned with what is happening to the children whose parent or parents work. Are they in fact being left alone? Are the facilities where they are placed providing good care--are the children being given opportunity to develop intellectually, socially, physically, and emotionally? As Mary Dublin Keyserling reminds us:

> A child care crisis confronts us today and it is intensifying. Let us no longer hide from ourselves the fact that millions of our children are neglected. Their future and the future of society are in jeopardy.[13]

Research has provided many of the guidelines for helping young children develop their real potential and move towards making this a better world. Let us get about the business of finding out what is happening so that we may bring about the improvements which are so necessary.

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[13]Keyserling, "Magnitude of Day Care Needs," p. 8.

III. FAMILY DAY CARE IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

The investigator's questionnaire was designed with a view to elicit information about the caretaker, the home and the charges, the ages of the children, and the number of hours the children are cared for. It included questions to determine what activities took place during the period of care and the relationship that existed between the day care mother and the child's parents.

The investigator then reviewed the differences and similarities between family day care and group day care, pointing out some of the advantages and disadvantages of each type.

A. Procedure

The first step in designing the study was the preparation of a questionnaire (Appendix I). The first page of this document contained confidential information concerning the age, income, and other data about the family involved in day care. Pages 2 and 3 contained questions which were asked of each day care mother (and in one instance, the

father). These were the questions concerning the children, their activities, and the relationships with the parents. The Department of Social Services reviewed the questionnaire for confidentiality and policy. The document was approved for use in connection with the study provided no confidential information was misused or publicized.

Next, a random sample of day care homes was selected. The card file containing the names and addresses of licensed homes (150 in alphabetic order) was reviewed. Every sixth card was pulled to make a total of 25 names chosen. These were listed on a master form (Appendix II) with three names to a page. Each family chosen was given a "Case No." so that only the case number appeared on the questionnaire form and the identity of day care homes became anonymous for the compilation of data.

With this information available, the Department of Social Services sent a letter (Appendix III) to each household chosen informing them of the survey and requesting cooperation. During the preparation and delivery of these letters, data for page 1 were secured from the Departmental files. Telephone calls were made to the homes and interview times set up. The first interviews were conducted November 13, 1970 and the last ones completed on January 8, 1971. The number of homes located in each area were as

follows: Damascus (1), Gaithersburg (1), Kensington (1), Rockville (3), Silver Spring (7), Takoma Park (3), and Wheaton (3).

B. Data Summarized

The data collected fall into three categories: the material secured from the department files; the factual data secured through interviewing the day care mothers; and the related questions and comments gathered through conversations during the interviews. (Few of these remarks have actually been written down but they are probably the most vivid part of some interviews and revealed a great deal about the interviewees' perceptions of children and day care.)

Of the 25 selected day care mothers, 4 were no longer involved in day care, 1 had moved out of town, and 1 refused to be interviewed, making a total of 6 drop-outs. The remaining 19 were interviewed in sessions ranging in length from 20 minutes to over an hour. The actual interview questions rarely required more than a half-hour, but the remainder of the time was spent in conversation. (Day care mothers spend long hours with children and rarely have week-day time for visits with adults. Some seemed delighted to have a chance to relate to a peer. One or two answered

as briefly as possible and showed little interest in a report on family day care.)

1. The Caretakers. All of the persons interviewed were married women currently living with their husbands. The most frequent reason given for participating in family day care was that their husbands did not want them to work outside the home--and an unverbalized need for additional money. One mother of preschoolers had found her earnings in an office marginal and the day care of her own children unsatisfactory, so she changed her occupation to that of family day care. Another was earning money in order to attend college full-time. An older person mentioned that she and her husband had never been able to afford a vacation until she was able to work at home in day care.

The age, educational level, income level, and vacation time of the family day care mothers are tabulated below:

Table I

Age of Caretakers

Age in Years	No. Persons
20 thru 24	3
25 thru 29	4
30 thru 34	4
35 thru 39	0
40 thru 44	3
45 thru 49	2
50 thru 54	2
55 thru 60	1
Total	19

Table II

Amount of Formal Education of Caretakers

Level of Education	No. of Persons
1. Less than high school	5
2. High school graduate	11
3. More than high school	2
4. College degree	1
Total	19

In category number 3, both persons had completed high school and then taken additional training which was specific to child care. In category number 4 the college degree earned was in early childhood education; this day care mother had previously worked in group day care. In these three homes in which the caretaker had training

specific to child care, the activities provided were more suitable to the children. There appeared to be a warmer relationship with the children.

Occupations in which the caretakers had been engaged were clerical, cosmetologist, counter girl, switchboard operator, delicatessen worker, meat wrapper, and cosmetic sales.

Table III

Family Income

Income Level	No. of Families
Less than $5,000	3
$ 5,000- 9,999	6
$10,000-14,999	9
$15,000-19,999	0
$20,000 and more	1
Total	19

Table IV

Vacations of Family Day Care Mothers

Length of Time	No. of Families
None	4
One week	7
Two weeks	5
Four weeks	1
Mid-June to Sept.	2
Total	19

The families with higher incomes tended to take longer vacations. Vacation times are carefully arranged with the children's families so that other arrangements can be made for the care of the children. In one instance where the caretaker takes the entire summer off, she is able to do this since she provides care only for children whose parents are public school teachers who also have the entire summer free from work.

In reply to the question about what the child calls the day care mother, the answers ranged from the first name of the caretaker (5), to the use of "Mrs." plus the last name (8), to "Mom" or some variation of that (6). The youngest caretakers preferred the children's using her first name, while the oldest preferred to be considered in the role of a grandparent. Older caretakers mentioned having children who objected to going home with their own parent at the end of the day.

2. Fees. The fee scale (except for the children whose care is paid for by the Department of Social Services) is set by the person providing the care. Those with the most experience charged the highest fees. One of the lowest fees was that paid by the Department of Social Services of $70 per month.

Table V

Fees Charged for Full Day Care
of 6 Hours or More

Fees for Full-Time	No. Children
$30/week/child	3
$25/week/child	15
$20/week/child	15
$15/week/child	5
$70/mth./child	1
$45/week/2 children	2
$33/week/2 children	2
Total	43

Table VI

Fees Charged for Part-Time Day Care
of Less Than 6 Hours

Fees for Part-Time	No. Children
$25/week/child	1*
$15/week/child	3
$12.50/week	4
$10.00/week	4
$ 7.50/week	2
$ 3.00/day	2
$ 1.00/hour for 2**	2
$ .50/hour	1
Total	19

*A retarded child who spends 5 hours daily with the caretaker.

**There is a charge of 60¢/hour for 1 child.

Different caretakers followed different practices in setting payment, such as charging an additional amount for meals, not charging when a child was absent for a day, and charging an additional amount if the parent was unduly late in picking the child up. In a few homes, the milk and diapers for infants were provided by the parents. At one home where one of the children brings lunch in a lunch box, the children who live there also have lunch boxes. Only one home served three meals to the children. In a majority of the homes the lunches are not charged for separately. Light meals were served, such as soup and a sandwich (usually peanut butter and jelly), spaghetti, noodles, hot dogs, and for dessert occasionally puddings or fruit. The caretakers believed the children had a full dinner at home in the evening.

3. Substitutes. When asked about the availability of substitutes when the day care mother herself was ill, most women stated that they were never ill and consequently never needed assistance; as for days off for emergencies, the parents usually manage to take time off or make other arrangements for the child. Five day care mothers asked the parents to place the children elsewhere. In three homes, the husband of the caretaker was available to take over the

child care duties. In seven homes, one or more neighbors could be called in. There were no written schedules of children's activities, nor written information about the children's habits, likes, or dislikes. The caretakers set up their own schedules, tried to meet the children's needs, but kept no records. It was difficult to determine whether most substitutes knew the children, particularly since it was reported that few visitors come to family day care homes. Where relatives (mother, husband, or other) acted as substitutes, it was probable that the relative was acquainted with the children. In four homes, the children knew the husband of the caretaker. One husband arrived during the interview and was greeted effusively by the children; in another, my slacks and black raincoat were mistaken for the man of the house. In another home, the children called the man "Pop-Pop," and one husband who had Mondays off played with the children that day.

4. Facilities. The houses varied in size from inexpensive two-bedroom, one-bath homes (3 of these), to moderately priced homes with finished basements and/or attics, either clapboard or clapboard and brick combined (10 of these); to 3 older homes, more spacious and more comfortable; plus 3 homes that were all or partly brick

with large rooms, big windows, and air conditioning throughout. In all but a couple of these were women who appeared to be meticulous housekeepers who did their work early in the morning or after the children went home.

Only two of the homes had no fenced area for the children's outdoor play but both of them provided large equipped areas away from the street. In one instance where there was a fenced area available, the boys were riding tricycles in the driveway and turning around at the edge of the driveway and street, but the street was a short dead-end one. The children seemed to feel quite at home riding their trikes with little supervision. In this home the mother let the children help bake cookies (one of the few who included children in any household task) although she expressed the opinion that this activity would be more appropriate for little girls who, she felt, enjoyed such an activity more.

5. The Children. The ages of the children in full-time care ranged from 2 months to almost 5 years. Those in part-time care varied from a 4-month-old taken care of 8 hours a day 4 days a week to a 2-1/2-year-old taken care of 4 hours a day 5 days a week, to a 10-year-old taken care of 1/2 hour before school and 3 hours after school. Children of school age spent from 1-1/2 hours to 4 hours daily with

the caretaker. Altogether 62 children were reported on. Several homes reported intermittent part-time clients whose comings and goings were too irregular to account for.

In tabulating the ages of the 62 children, we have recorded their ages at the time of the interview. Exact birthdates were not given but rather the approximate age of the child so that we can only say that the child was "younger than" a certain age, but obviously older than the previous age listed.

Table VII

Ages of Children

Ages of Children	No. of Children
Younger than 1	5
Younger than 2	6
Younger than 3	16
Younger than 4	10
Younger than 5	5
Younger than 6	8
Younger than 7	3
Younger than 8	4
Younger than 9	2
Younger than 10	1
Younger than 11	2
Total	62

The number of hours that the children spent in the homes daily and the number of hours weekly can be tabulated as follows:

Table VIII

Hours of Care on a Daily Basis

No. Hours in Home Per Day	No. of Children
Less than 4	13
Less than 5	3
Less than 6	5
Less than 7	1
Less than 8	5
Less than 9	9
Less than 10	19
Less than 11	7
Total	62

Table IX

Hours of Care on a Weekly Basis

No. Hours in Home Per Week	No. of Children
Less than 5	1
5-9	3
10-14	7
15-19	3
20-24	5
25-29	4
30-34	3
35-39	3
40-44	5
45-49	18
50+	7
Total	62

Apparent discrepancies in numbers between hours per day and hours per week occur because some children are cared for only 3 or 4 days per week.

6. The Activities. The section of the questionnaire with regard to activities was designed to describe indoor and outdoor toys, equipment, and play, to try to determine the suitability of equipment and activities and to find out how much time the caretakers spent playing with or stimulating the children. As the interviews unfolded, it became clear that day care mothers select children so that the several children could play with the same kinds of toys and could usually entertain each other: 3 boys aged 4, 5, and 7; 4 boys 7, 8, 9, and 10; 3 boys and 1 girl aged 2, 2-1/2, 2-1/2, and 3; 1 girl and 2 boys aged 20 months, 2, and 2-1/2; 2 boys aged 5-1/2 and 6. Either a dining room, a porch, or a basement had been converted into the children's playroom. There was always a record player and records (one group of children was resting to Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite).

In two homes, a box of toys was referred to but not seen. In most homes there was an abundance of playthings, the wide variety making them impossible to tabulate. There were apt to be more cars and blocks if there were boys, more dolls and crayons if there were girls. Few homes had

puzzles. There were always bikes or vehicles to ride and nearly always a sandbox and swings. Some husbands had constructed sandboxes with sturdy covers. However, only 10 of the 19 caretakers specifically mentioned activities they carried on with the children at sometime during the day. These included dancing to music, telling stories, using a flannel board, playing Simon Says, throwing a bean bag, or taking a walk. Thirteen mothers read to the children regularly with 4 listing storytime as a daily scheduled activity. (In one of these, a teenage girl came in the afternoon for storytime, often bringing her guitar.) The other six mothers read stories occasionally or seldom.

As for television shows, five homes used Sesame Street as a daily activity. Others let the children watch one or two of the children's TV shows, mentioning Captain Kangaroo and cartoons. In at least three homes, the TV set was on during the entire interview.

The question as to whether or not the family day care mothers let the children help with household tasks was usually answered negatively, except for the one mother who let the children help her with cookies and another who grudgingly admitted that one child liked to dust sometimes. Twice ironing boards were in evidence so that those two people probably watch and talk to the children while they

complete some of their household work. Most women said they completed their housework after the children left or did it before they came. Either the homes were so orderly that the only things that seemed out of place were the toys the children were playing with, or it was such a casual atmosphere that it hardly mattered what was out of place. The fact that the children never helped with cooking, or setting the table, or cleaning up (occasionally the children were asked to put away their own toys) somehow made family day care seem less "homelike" and quite similar to a group day care center where teachers and aides are preoccupied with the activities of the children also.

With regard to taking the children out, seven day care mothers reported they occasionally visited in other homes. Eight mothers took the children to a playground. Others gave as reasons for not going: the children were too young; the park was too far away; the home provided a good enough play space; no car available; and afraid to take the children in a car. Five mothers reported taking children on trips. The trips listed included going to the store, walks around the neighborhood, to the post office, and to the library. While most of the mothers reported that they spend a good deal of time outdoors in good weather, the caretakers in general could not cope with getting the small

children out in the cold weather since getting them dressed in warm clothes was more than the caretaker could manage.

Several day care mothers asked for guidance in the kind of toys and equipment to provide and how to handle disobedient children. The most difficult question was what to do about a silent robot-like child about 2 years old.

7. Placement. Inquiries as to the parent and child visits prior to placement elicited casual replies. Yes, the mothers came for half-an-hour or so and usually brought the child along. Three mothers indicated in-depth interviews to find out the mother's style of handling the child. In two instances, it was reported that a mother had made the arrangements by telephone so that neither she nor the child had seen the place, nor had the day care mother seen the child prior to the child's being left at the day care home. Working mothers apparently depend in part on references or leave their children with friends. "I only take children of people I know," one caretaker said; while another commented, "The mother wanted to leave him here because her sister recommended me."

8. Relationships with Parents. Relationships with parents tend to be poor or non-existent. Most day care mothers find the parents are in too much of a hurry to

discuss the child either in the morning or at the end of the day. In one instance, the caretaker found that the mother resented being told about her child's progress--the mother wanted to observe the infant's new activity or learning skill rather than being told about it. Another day care mother reported the misbehavior of a child to the parent--stating both the problem and the discipline already administered--only to learn that the child was punished a second time by the mother at home. Another reported having an ill child being left hastily by the father. In spite of her efforts to isolate the child (she verified with her own doctor the child's symptoms and probable contagion), both her children and the others in the home all became ill. Needless to say, she rebuked the parent whom she never saw again. Only one day care mother reported that she sets up regular telephone conference time to discuss the children with the parents.

Generally the day care parents tried to remain uninvolved with the family of the child and its problems. It was the exception rather than the rule that the day care mother tried to give any reassurance to the parent.

Questions contained in the interview form but not covered here included more information about the house which was difficult to obtain and not really pertinent.

Information about physical examinations and TB examinations was not necessary since the licensing process requires a medical statement that members of the family are in good health as well as annual TB examinations. Emergency information so that the child's family and/or doctor can be reached is also required.

However, the material secured in the interviews did supply much good basic information. The primary questions that were dealt with are these: How adequately are children's needs being met at present? How can the quantity and quality of service be improved?

C. Conclusions

As shown by the observations summarized in this paper, these 19 family day care homes are well-kept; a majority of persons engaged in this occupation are people who like children and are experienced in dealing with young children; only a few have any training in the field of child care. Everyone interviewed was trying to do a good job but many were asking for help, some unconsciously: "What else would 2-year-olds like to play with?" "What else should I do with 7- and 8-year-olds?" "Do you think that was right?" "How do you handle such a situation?" "No one ever comes by to see us after the initial inspection."

What can we say then about the differing strengths of good family day care and good group day care? With the great need for day care, what needs to be done to secure more family day care homes? What can be done about unlicensed day care? How can family day care mothers get the kind of training and/or supervision they seem to need in order to choose the most suitable toys and to understand what comprises a good relationship with the children and their parents?

The scope of day care is such a broad one that a paper of this kind cannot answer all the questions, but the ones listed above seem to be the ones emerging as matters of pertinent concern at this time.

In considering the strengths and weaknesses of family day care and group day care, the primary differences include the following:

1. Flexibility of schedules
2. Working day of caretakers
3. Quantity and quality of equipment
4. Opportunities for trips--outdoor play
5. Atmosphere
6. Relationship between parent and caretakers
7. Consistency of placement.

One advantage of family day care over group day care is the varying hours at which children may be deposited and

picked up. Day care homes can provide far more flexible scheduling of care. However, only one home willingly provided holiday or weekend care. As noted, two homes were closed during the summer months, another for a month, and five for 2-week periods. Day care centers cannot as easily provide for part-time children or for as wide a range of ages of children--whereas in one home an infant was cared for during a 9-hour period and children aged 7, 8, and 9 for 3-hour periods. In instances such as these, the caretaker has only the infant during the major part of the day and the part-time school-age children when her own children are at home. She thus provides playmates for her own children while she takes care of children whose parents are at work.

In group day care, there are only a few days when a worker may be on the job for more than an 8-hour day--as opposed to 35 children in family day care homes who spent more than 9, 10, and 11 hours daily with the caretaker.

There is more suitable and varied equipment in the day care center. Since day care centers are currently prevented by the guidelines from serving children in an age range lower than 3, the equipment purchased is suited to children aged 3-5.

Trips are scheduled regularly for day care centers which have a supplemental staff of volunteers to assist in getting the children ready and keeping up with them once away from the center. Also at the center the schedule is arranged so that the children get outdoors daily, while many day care homes simply cannot cope with seeing that three or four small children get bundled up and out even briefly in colder weather.

While the children can get away from the center for new experiences, there is seldom an opportunity for a child to escape from the group of 10-15 children. In a day care home, the number of children is limited by the State Guidelines to 4, which in even the smallest home allows some space for privacy. Besides, 3 companions is not likely to be the overwhelming number that 10-15 might be. If the State Guidelines are not adhered to, the children in family day care lose that privacy.

Because the Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements refer to "mothering" in their definitions of day care, the investigator kept looking for a special kind of "mothering" treatment in family day care. In particular, the investigator noted that the definition for a day care center reads:

> 3. The day care center serves groups of 12 or more children. It utilizes subgroupings on the basis of age and special need but provides opportunity for the experience and learning that accompanies a mixing of ages. Day care centers should not accept children under 3 years of age unless the care available approximates the mothering in a family home. Centers do not usually attempt to simulate family living . . . .[14]

The phrase "unless the care approximates the mothering in a family home" does not in most cases apply to the family day care settings, as good as they were. The family day care mother is not busy around the house--she does her housework before the children come or after they leave. She does not involve them in her affairs, nor herself in theirs, except for their supervision which is of course her job. She doesn't take them shopping or visiting, so that the setting in many ways is closely akin to that of group day care.

Besides, isn't all day care really substitute or supplemental "mothering"? The teachers and aides in a day care center and the family day care mother have as a basic assignment understanding the child's needs and providing for them in such a way as not to disrupt his progress but to add to it whatever dimensions the child is currently ready for.

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[14] Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements, pursuant to Sec. 522 (d) of the Economic Opportunity Act, as approved by U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity, U.S. Department of Labor, September 23, 1968 (reprinted 1970), p. 5.

Gertrude Hoffman, day care specialist at the Office of Child Development, stated in an interview:

> At one point, critics were saying that since family day care is not living up to our hopes, we should discontinue it and return to group care, even for infants. Instead, we should stop comparing bad care of one variety with good care of another--each must be done well--each has something special to offer.[15]

With this the investigator agrees, but questions the use of the term "mothering" to distinguish the special kind of nurturing that children need. At a time when educators and psychologists are stressing the need for the male image in the healthy growth and development of a child, why are we turning to such a feminine concept as "mothering" to describe the task? Any female can become a biological mother--but there are the smothering mothers, the abusive mothers, the neglecting mothers, and the liberated mothers, to mention a few types of women who are not apt to supply the kind of mothering described. The term is easily understood or misunderstood. Recently it has been beautifully and fully defined in the new booklet More Than a Teacher.[16] The

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[15]Gertrude Hoffman, "New Opportunities in Day Care: An Interview with Gertrude Hoffman," Young Children (May, 1969), p. 276.

[16]Lois B. Murphy and Ethel Leeper, More Than a Teacher, Caring for Children--number two, Bureau of Head Start and Early Childhood, Office of Child Development (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1970), p. 20.

authors stress the need for a "mothering teacher"! In today's world where male teachers are being encouraged, where fathers are expected to play a stronger role, we need to find a new term for the away-from-home supplemental caring persons. Persons who are to function as the child's enabler or guide need a new nomenclature that will designate the duties and responsibilities of this particular job.

The relationships between the parents and family day care mothers seem to present problems. How to relate to the child's parents is a situation with which few of the day care mothers know how to cope, except not to bother with trying to establish a relationship. From the literature, it would appear that such practice is not in the best interest of the child. Day care centers try to have parent group meetings and parent-teacher conferences to exchange information about the child. However, both groups have much to learn about relating to parents.

In at least four instances, children have "lived" in the same day care home from the time they were infants of 2 or 3 months. These children have a consistency of care that no center can offer since none in the area is equipped to take children under 3.

While there are 150 homes already licensed, everyone knows of homes providing care that are not licensed. Persons

providing family day care seem to be aware of friends who do not wish to bother with the formalities while others in the up-country area tell of homes that charge a weekly fee of only $10 per child for the entire week of 8 hours or more daily. The primary obstacles then appear to be the necessary investigations by departmental inspectors and other requirements of licensing and the limitation as to the number of children permitted under a license (no more than 4 per household). The licensing requirements of health inspection, filing an application, securing TB tests for all members of the family annually, plus a complete physical examination initially, plus supplying character references, are resented by many persons. One person now in family day care who refused to be interviewed stated that she and her husband did not want to answer any more questions. As for the limitation on the number of children, a charge of $10 per child per week would limit the income of the day care home to $40 per week. With a charge of $25 per child per week, the earnings increase to $100 per week. The overhead costs to the day care mothers are few; no new clothes to buy, as is often the case when a mother goes out of the home to work; no transportation costs, and no lunches out. Purchasing toys and providing the children's lunches are the only items of expense. But should the State guidelines

permit more children per home? Would that encourage more people to undertake family day care? Would publicity emphasizing the importance of having a license encourage others to become licensed? Could the local offices take care of licensing with their present staffs?

D. Recommendations

In the area of providing a counseling service to day care, there would certainly be a need for increased staff. The State of Maryland Department of Social Services "Guidelines for Day Care" specify:

> Sufficient play materials and equipment of safe construction shall always be available in the day care home for indoor and outdoor schedule of activity suitable to the ages of the children . . . .[17]

It would appear from the remark of at least one family day care mother that no follow-up visit is ever made to the home. If the guidelines are to be carried out, the State should provide the funds for consultants in child growth and development to be available to consult with the homes that are licensed. Further, this has been recommended by the ACEI Position Paper:

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[17]Maryland, State Department of Social Services, "Guidelines for Day Care," Rockville, Maryland, 1968, p. 12. (Mimeographed.)

> For the protection of the child, a great need exists for state standards for day care that they include not only licensing but also consultant service to provide for continued upgrading of the quality of the program.[18]

The Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements predicted that family day care mothers might need assistance in the statement:

> Special techniques for training of day care mothers in family day care homes may need to be developed. One example of such technique is the use of a "roving trainer" who would have responsibility for working on a continuous basis with several day care mothers in their own homes.[19]

Perhaps the State should seek a research grant to develop a technique of this kind. Currently, although the amount of funds proposed for day care in the State of Maryland is at an all-time high (although the 1971 Legislature has not approved the budget), the budget probably does not cover this kind of cost.

The sample of family day care homes studied in this report presents an optimistic picture of the quality of care that children in Montgomery County can expect to receive. In order to expand the number of day care homes

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[18] Annie L. Butler, "The Child's Right to Quality Day Care," Childhood Education (November, 1970), p. 59.

[19] Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements, p. 13.

that are licensed, the guidelines need to be adhered to -- to the number of children allowed in each home. In order to improve the quality of care, a consultant should be available to visit the homes and help the persons who have questions and possibly to expand the program of group consultation the Department has initiated. A Family Life Department (usually under the Board of Education) could also prove helpful to parents who are seeking day care and need to understand the problems that face them and the caretaker when they decide to seek employment and day care for a child.

Our concern is that day care provide a favorable environment for infants and young children wherever they may be:

> . . . The infant begins to interact with his environment from the moment of birth and one of the important functions of the adult is to control, mediate and interpret the environment so that the infant receives stimulation with protection.[20]

The guidelines and persons working with them are particularly concerned with protecting the child. And since we know that children are often mistreated, this emphasis is understandable and appropriate. We would like to see the time come when more emphasis can be placed on giving

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[20] Sally Provence, Guide for the Care of Infants in Groups (New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc., 1967), p. 37.

guidance to improve the quality of care and stimulation children are receiving as well as providing guidance for the parents who must work.

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX II

MASTER LIST

APPENDIX III

OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION

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